

Romulus Hillsborough — Historical Consulting Overview

Expert on the Bakumatsu–Meiji Restoration / Samurai History

What I Do

I provide historical consulting for professionals working on projects involving the final years of samurai rule and the political and cultural transformation that followed (1850s–1870s). This includes guidance on historical and cultural accuracy, narrative coherence, and the interpretation of Japanese-language primary sources.

Clients include authors, editors, publishers, documentarians, producers, and screenwriters.

Core Areas of Expertise

- Political, military, social, cultural, and intellectual history of the Bakumatsu era (final years of the shogunate)
- The fall of the shogunate and the Meiji Restoration (restoration of imperial rule)
- Samurai factions, rivalries, and ideological movements
- Political intrigue inside the shogunate, imperial court, and major feudal domains
- Major figures: Katsu Kaishū, Sakamoto Ryōma, Saigō Takamori, Takechi Hanpeita, Kondō Isami, Hijikata Toshizō, Yoshida Shōin, Takasugi Shinsaku, Yamaoka Tesshū, Tokugawa Yoshinobu
- The Shinsengumi — subject of my forthcoming book *Samurai Swordsmen* (Helion, 2026)
- Social, cultural, and intellectual history of the era
- Character-driven historical insight, demonstrated throughout my published work, that strengthens the authenticity and depth of screen and narrative projects

What I Provide

- Historical, cultural, and biographical accuracy
- Manuscript and narrative consulting
- Explanation of cultural meaning, etiquette, and social expectations of the samurai era
- Analysis of primary sources and key secondary scholarship
- Evaluation of conflicting Japanese-language sources
- Guidance on chronology, terminology, factional dynamics, and political structure
- Clarification of myths, misconceptions, and common errors in English-language treatments
- Support for nonfiction, literary, and screen-based projects
- Historical and character-based guidance that helps creators develop accurate, nuanced, and believable portrayals

Qualifications

- 40+ years of research and writing
- Six books on the Bakumatsu–Meiji Restoration, translated into eight foreign languages
- Direct engagement with Japanese archival and primary sources
- Ability to read and interpret late-Edo-period documents and manuscripts
- Mastery across political, military, cultural, and ideological dimensions of the era
- Sixteen years living and working in Japan
- On-site research across Japan
- 50+ years of traditional Japanese martial arts practice
- Master’s degree in humanities

Selected Recognition

- Personal commendation from Prime Minister Keizō Obuchi
- Praised in *The Japan Times*, *Yomiuri Daily News*, *TLS*, *Kirkus*, and *Choice*
- Positive evaluations from multiple military-history editors
- Recognized for making this history and culture accessible to international audiences

Inquiries

For consulting inquiries or project discussion, please use the contact form at:

www.samurai-revolution.com